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Waterdown

We wish to thank the people of Waterdown for their efforts in trying to save our Garage and Hardware building at the fire last Tuesday.

ALTON BROS.

The Farm

Timely Articles by the Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.

TEST YOUR SEED CORN

Seed With Strong Vitality Is an Absolute Necessity.

Give Your Seed a Careful Germination Test—It Should Run 95 Per Cent—The Mulberry in Ontario—Home-made Spray for Flies.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

Two ears of corn may be used to plant two rows side by side. The seed may weigh the same and look the same, but the results in plant development and yield is frequently vastly different. Two stalks may stand together in the same hill, enjoying similar conditions for growth and development. One may produce a good ear while the other produces an inferior nubbin.

Seed With Good Vitality a Necessity.

The difference is traceable to the seed. Good vital seed from select stock will generally give strong plants and full ears. Unselected seed will give a few good plants and many medium or barren plants. Enormous loss and waste would be prevented each year if care were exercised by all purchasers of seed corn. A few hills missed in each row, a few weak or barren plants distributed over the corn field, reduces or eliminates all opportunity for profit. The interest, taxes and wages have to be paid in full no matter what the crop is, and the more frequent the missed spaces, barren stalks, and weak stalks in the corn field the less there is to pay with.

Give the Seed a Germination Test.

All seed corn should be given a germination test before planting. One poor seed ear going into the planter means a waste in land, and labor that is best expressed by one thousand weak or worthless stalks. The corn grower can't afford to neglect the quality of the seed he sows.

Plant one hundred seeds two or three weeks in advance of the regular corn planting date, using a box of moist sand placed in a warm window as a germinator. Count the strong plants at the end of ten days; there should be at least 95 of them. If the test shows any weakness discard all the seed and secure another supply with a guaranteed germination test.—L. Stevenson, Secretary, Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.

The Mulberry.

The old-time fruit-bearing mulberry has lost its place in the gardens of southern Ontario. Better fruits have crowded it out, until it is rarely seen in the modern garden or fruit plantation. Sometimes planted as a food tree for birds by bird enthusiasts or by those desiring to play with silk worm culture in this northern climate. During the past year, through southwestern Ontario mulberry trees have been offered to the public by traveling agents. The experiences of the past with the mulberry as a fruit producing tree and as a food producing tree for silk worms in Ontario and the United States would indicate that nothing very great by way of achievement or profit is likely to follow the planting of any of the mulberry varieties in Ontario. One tree for the birds is probably all any one farm can afford. As for the development of mulberry plantations for silk culture, such hardly seems profitably possible under the climatic and labor conditions of Ontario.—L. Stevenson, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Toronto.

Farm Notes.

Michigan is the first state to offer a reward for planting nut trees beside highways. In Europe the profit from roadside nut trees assists in maintaining roads. Roadside nut trees abroad are protected from vandals by public sentiment, and this is true of the nut orchards in the principal centre of production in America.

By means of a potato cutter, a potato planter, and a potato digger, along with other machines, a farmer has been able to produce 57 bushels of potatoes with one average hour's labor. A half century ago the product was only one-third as much, says the United States Department of Agriculture.

Noah Up to Date.

From the time of Noah when the dove brought the green back, homing pigeons have been of constant service to mankind. That well-bred stock of this breed is desirable is shown by a live-stock owner in Henrico County, Va. He lists 22 homing pigeons of pure breeding among other live stock enrolled in the Better Sires.

ABOUT SOILING CROPS

An Easy Way to Supplement Dry Midsummer Pastures.

Alfalfa and Clover, Peas, Oats and Corn Cut Green Make Succulent, Nourishing Food — Weed Seeds Spread by Manure — What to Plant in a Late Garden.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

When the pastures dry up in June, July, August or September, the shrinkage is noted in the milk can and on the ribs of all the live stock. No grass, no milk, no beef, or at least not enough to be really profitable, is a condition both undesirable and too frequent in the experience of many farmers.

Live stock to be profitable must be fed liberally. Maintenance rations—dry pastures are nothing more—never make beef or milk, and never can be profitable.

Feeding Soiling Crops Prevents Losses.

The farmer who provides green or succulent feed to carry his live stock at full capacity during any period of pasture shortage is not only making his operations profitable, but he is preventing losses that liberal feeding alone can prevent.

The farmer who takes time by the forelock and provides a summer silo does not worry about drought, knowing full well that his stock feed reserve is standing ready. The man without the summer silo must do the next best thing, provide ample green crops that are palatable and succulent to do what the pastures fail to do. A few pounds of green peas and oats, green clover, green alfalfa or green corn in addition to the dry pasture pickings make for contentment, a full milk pail and thrifty young stock.

How to Carry Over Ten Cows.

If a farmer has ten cows he should figure on the crop from one half acre providing ample green feed to carry them ten days. Peas and oats mixed one and a half bushels of each, and sown as early as possible in the spring, and followed by a second seeding ten days later, will provide for twenty days of an early drought.

An area of alfalfa near the feed-yard is especially useful during July and August to keep the stock going until the early corn is ready. Sweet clover is more useful as a pasture plant than as a crop plant that may be cut and taken to the feed rack.

Clovers, peas, oats and corn will furnish all the succulent feeds that are necessary providing of course that the stockman undertakes their production in due time each spring. Grow a few additional acres for green feed this spring, and if drought occurs you will be fortified against loss.—L. Stevenson, Secretary, Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.

Weed Seed Spread by Manure.

It is quite generally known that weed seeds pass through the digestive tracts of animals and still remain viable. The manure will contain these seeds, and the result is that a field may become infested with weed plants, some of a very noxious character. In spite of this fact, precautions are not generally observed in the feeding of screenings which contain seeds of noxious weeds.

As a result of experiments at the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, it was found that in feeding certain seeds to cows the germination may even be increased after having passed through the digestive tract. Curled dock, a very common farm weed, germinated only four per cent. in its natural condition. A quantity of this seed was fed to a cow, and 100 such seeds were placed in a germinator. Ninety-eight out of the one hundred grew. The same is true to some extent of lambs' quarters, often known as pigweed. The seed of this weed germinated 62 per cent. before feeding, 88 per cent. after feeding. The germination of quack grass seemingly was not much affected, as a germination of 85 per cent. was secured before feeding, and 80 per cent. after feeding. The viability of Canada thistle seed was decreased to some extent, but enough seed remained to infest a field.

In view of the foregoing figures, the farmer should be very careful in the use of screenings. They should either be ground to the very finest possible condition, so as to crush all weed seeds, or else they should be fed to such animals as sheep, which grind up and thoroughly destroy the ordinary weed seeds.

MOULDY SWEET CLOVER

is a Dangerous Feed, Especially to Young Cattle.

Investigational Work by Provincial Veterinarians — It Makes Castration and Dehorning Risky—More Research and Experimenting Necessary.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

Recently considerable sickness and losses have been reported among cattle being fed on ensilage. In some instances only a few animals have been affected on a particular farm, but in a few cases the losses have been serious, as one farmer is known to have lost 17 animals out of a herd of 50 cattle. The frequency and peculiarity of these losses has led the Department to have investigations and experiments made to determine the cause.

Investigational Work by Ontario Veterinarians.

The staff of the Ontario Veterinary College have been in close touch with the veterinary surgeons throughout the province, and reliable information obtained as to the prevailing circumstances where cattle have died. In all cases investigation has revealed the fact that the losses have occurred among cattle fed extensively on sweet clover ensilage which had become mouldy. Samples of the ensilage were shipped to the Veterinary College, and experiments conducted clearly indicated that mouldy sweet clover ensilage was harmful to cattle. From observations and information available at the present time, it would appear that the harm is confined to sweet clover ensilage which has become mouldy, and that the continued feeding of it is liable to cause death.

Young Cattle the First to Succumb.

It is an interesting fact that young cattle under three years of age are the ones which suffer most severely and succumb the quickest. In illustration of this the case mentioned where in a herd of 50 cattle the 17 which died were all young cattle under two years of age and in good condition. No sickness had been present in the herd until after the feeding of the ensilage commenced, and the losses occurred within a few weeks. Apparently mature cattle over four years of age are able to withstand the ill effects better than young cattle. However, continued feeding of damaged sweet clover ensilage may be harmful to cattle of all ages.

It Makes Castration and Dehorning Dangerous.

It is also interesting to note that operations such as dehorning and castration performed on cattle that have been kept largely on mouldy sweet clover ensilage caused sudden death in many cases, while the same operations similarly performed on cattle fed differently have not been followed by ill effects. The exact nature of the poisonous factor associated with the ensilage, and the manner in which it produces harmful effects in cattle and to cause their death has not yet been definitely determined, and any opinions expressed at the present time are based on practical observations.

More Research and Experimenting Required.

In fact a large amount of intense study, investigation and research will be necessary to obtain reliable conclusions regarding the possible dangers incidental to the feeding of mouldy sweet clover ensilage, or as to whether sweet clover cut at certain stages and under certain conditions develops harmful properties as silage. In the meantime sufficient evidence is at hand to justify warning farmers against the feeding of mouldy ensilage to live stock in order to avoid losses, and under no circumstances should operations including dehorning and castration be performed on cattle which are being fed on sweet clover ensilage if it appears mouldy. Such animals seem to develop marked vascular changes which produce a tendency to internal hemorrhage resulting in death.—Dr. C. D. McGilvray, President, Ontario Veterinary College, Toronto.

Clover Seed Grown at Home Is Safest.

Clover seed from Italy and other countries of similar climate produces plants that are not hardy in northern districts of Canada and the United States. In 1919 four and one-half millions of pounds of this seed came into the United States. This seed is not sold to farmers in the condition that it comes in, because seed-houses know it is inferior and will not produce good crops. Therefore it is mixed with native clover seed and undoubtedly is the cause to a considerable extent of the unsatisfactory clover crops. The only way to be safe is to buy from reliable firms which will guarantee the source of the seed or purchase from growers in the immediate vicinity.

When purchasing direct from growers care should be exercised to secure seed free from noxious and otherwise troublesome weed seeds.—A. C. Army, University of Minnesota.